

Living sixty-five miles from the closest town and store (at Roy) and fifteen miles from the post office at Ross, Mr. Thomas can remember carrying a fifty-pound sack of flour on his back for ten miles from Fort Musselshell, and also walking 12 miles back and forth each day to build a log cabin at Kismet. He also remembers the old Fletcher's Saloon and Trading Post at Fort Musselshell when it was a typical early-day saloon with the doors shot full of holes. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas say they lived the hardships of all homesteaders.

While they lived on the homestead, a son was born, died, and buried at Mecaha. In 1918, a daughter, Goldie (Mrs. John Schreier), was born. The Mecaha Post Office and store was established two miles away in 1915, and homesteaders began to populate the river valley. The year 1918 was a prosperous one, and fine crops were raised.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas and the three children lived on the homestead until 1927, when they moved to Saginaw, Michigan, living there four years, and coming back to Montana and the home place in 1931. Their sons remained in Michigan. During the years 1931 to 1936, the Fort Peck Reservoir was being surveyed. Mr. Thomas worked with the surveyors, and 15 surveyors and engineers lived at their ranch for three years while surveying the reservoir. In 1936 they again moved to Saginaw and returned to Winnett upon retirement in 1949 (See also THOMAS — Winnett).

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas still owned their homestead, but little was left of the log buildings. The water of Fort Peck Lake came almost to their land, making it the last ranch on the river at the south end of the lake. After the Thomases died, their daughter Goldie leased the homestead to Tony Weingart, then Marcus Matovich, until the U. S. Fish and Wildlife bought the land for inclusion in the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge.

TOWN, Richard (Sec 17-20-30) Born in England, Richard Town and his brother traveled to the United States as young men. Richard secured an ox team and traveled on to Montana in 1887. As he was passing through, he met Mary Hewitt, a native of Bervie, Ontario. Staying on in Montana, he filed on a homestead in south Phillips County, then a part of Valley County. Richard and Mary were married and lived in North Dakota for awhile before returning to Montana in 1904. They built a home in Malta, while establishing a horse ranch south of the Missouri River, at the mouth of Soda Creek, in what is now Petroleum County. Mr. Town loved Percheron draft horses and much of his operation revolved around raising them.

Mr. Town cleared the river bottoms, raised alfalfa for hay and for seed, and brought in cattle to stock the ranches he had developed on both sides of the Missouri River.

The Towns had four children — John, Ada, Eva and William. When the children reached school age, Mary Town and the children moved to Malta for the school

terms, and returned to the ranch in the summer.

In 1922 Richard Town died from an infection caused by carbuncles on his head. Mary Town moved to the ranch full time and lived there with her two sons until she died in 1934. She ran the Bervie Post Office from 1922 to 1932.

Ada was a teacher and later County Superintendent of Schools in Petroleum County. She married Dent Stouffer and they moved to Colorado, where they spent the rest of their lives. (See also STOUFFER — Cat Creek)

Eva was also a teacher. She married Joe Murphy of Roy. They have a home in Roy and a large ranching operation near Roy. Eva had a great interest in Montana history and wrote numerous newspaper articles about early Musselshell River days.

John was born in 1901 in North Dakota and attended school at Malta. Although John was crippled in childhood from polio, he kept active. He and his brother, Bill Town, took over the management of the Town Ranch when their father died. In about 1927, they sold off the horses and concentrated on cattle and alfalfa. John took great pride in his ability to produce good crops of alfalfa seed, and for many years the ranch would produce as much as a full railway car of seed.

John liked the water and boating. He patrolled the river by boat to check on the livestock. Machinery and hay were ferried across the river by boat, but the cattle and horses were moved across by swimming, with John herding them across by boat.

In 1939 the ranch was sold to the government, but Towns had the opportunity to lease the ranch back for five years and continue to live there. They established a new headquarters on the smaller ranch on the north side of the river, but continued to raise cattle and alfalfa on the south side until 1943, when the Fort Peck Lake flooded them out. They had moved the house back up the hill out of danger. The next winter, they moved the house across the river on the ice to the new headquarters. They continued to ranch there for several years.

John moved to Bridger in 1958. He never married. John died in 1971 and is buried in the Malta Cemetery.

W. R. "Bill" Town ranched with his brother, John, on their place in northern Petroleum County. Bill married Evelyn Heiser at Malta in 1933. They had three daughters — Marilyn, Rosemarie, and Margaret.

Bill Town died in 1987 and is buried in the Malta Cemetery.

John Town had a favorite story he liked to tell about a flood on the river. "In 1908 we got one of the biggest floods that I ever heard of on the Missouri. It ran from hill to hill; and ran everyone to the hills. We lived in a tent on the hill for some time afterwards. The man who ran the store, post office and ferry was drowned and most of his stuff washed away, and that was the end of that ferry. They moved the Kismet Post Office up to the UL Ranch on the north side of the river for a few years, and the ranchers took turns at carrying the mail from the Leedy

Post Office.

"After the big flood in 1908, they had a flood sale of all the flood damaged goods at Kismet. There was a steamboat company that had an interest in the store, and they took the boat and gathered all the settlers along the way up and down the river and took them down to the sale on July 4, 1908.

"After the sale, they returned to the UL Ranch, where they had left George Beckler, an old, noted roundup cook, to have a chicken and dumpling Fourth of July dinner for everyone. They left Dad Hickman with Mr. Beckler to help, and keep him sober, as there was a large amount of wet goods stored in the UL house from the flooded store and saloon at Kismet.

"Mr. Beckler was a real good cook when sober, but when we all arrived back from the sale on the steamboat, the two cooks were dead to the world at the UL Ranch, but we found the chickens outside in a large hog-feed cooker boiling away with the feathers on. So my mother and Mrs. Fletcher dumped them out and got the feathers off, and the large crowd still had chicken and dumplings!"

TRESCH, Andrew and Edwin (Sec 28,31-21-29) Andrew (1889) and Edwin (1894) Tresch were born in Switzerland. They came to the United States with the Machler brothers and took up homesteads in the Chain Buttes area south of the Missouri River. They stayed in the area until they retired and moved to Lewistown. Neither man married. Edwin died in 1978, Andrew in 1987. (Frank Machler)

TUOHY, Charlotte (Sec 7-16-30) Charlotte Dixon came to Montana in the 1860s with her parents, the Charles Dixons. She married Larkin Sandidge and had two children — Cora and Charles. Cora married Thomas Gilfeather.

Charlotte and Larkin were divorced and she married P. J. Tuohy. After his death in 1910, she and her uncle, James Dixon, journeyed up the Musselshell River to visit her children, Cora Gilfeather and Charlie Sandidge. They both filed on homesteads. Charlotte stayed long enough to prove up. The Ross School was located on the Tuohy place for several years. Charlotte moved back to Helena, where she died in 1941.

James Dixon's homestead was farther upstream. He lived there until he died, leaving his place to Charlotte and his sister, Emma Conlon.

TUSS, Peter F. (Sec 31,32-20-30) The following family story was contributed by son, Peter J. Tuss. "Peter Tuss immigrated to this country in 1905, under the sponsorship of his uncle, also Peter Tuss, who was a stonemason by trade in Lewistown. Dad worked with him about a year. He heard about the homesteads that were available at that time in eastern Fergus County, now Petroleum County. Wanting to go on his own, he went to the mouth of the Musselshell River and took up squatter's rights on an acreage right on the river where it drained into the

Missouri River.

"Pete Tuss worked for the Town Brothers to help make ends meet. He worked as a camp cook and handy man for the cowboys who were working the cattle.

"In his quest to find his niche in life, Peter F. Tuss used his very limited education. He could hardly speak English and could neither read nor write it. He was befriended by a banker in Winnett, Hamm Greene, who gave him the opportunity to lease some land 5½ miles southeast of Winnett, and he helped set him up in the farming business in 1918. My father was not a farmer, so he had to learn the hard way; and with little education and no experience in tilling, he did quite well. He worked at Kendall, Montana, in the gold mines when he was not farming.

"Peter married Katerina Mikich, widow of Matt Mikich (See also MIKICH — Teigen.) She had five children. They had both emigrated from Birbir, Yugoslavia.

"They loaded up and went back to the farm near Winnett. Six more children were born to this marriage — Frank (1922), Georgia (1923), Pete (1925), Jean (1926), Betty (1928) and Geraldine (1930). With little to go on, they still fed and clothed the eleven children and themselves.

"In 1925 my father got his first car, a Model T touring car, and with it he could pick up a little more work. He used to run bootleg whiskey from Lewistown to the coal mines in Roundup. He got the whiskey from his brother who had a still near Lewistown. Every trip was a nightmare for my mother, as this was against the law, and she was sure each trip he would get caught. To my knowledge, he never did get caught.

"We continued to live near Winnett until the stock market crash in 1929. That was when everything went bad for us. Hamm Greene lost his bank, and Dad lost all of his assets when the bank went broke. In 1930 he had to pull up stakes and we moved to the Tyson place near Lewistown in the foothills of the Judith Mountains. In 1937 or 1938 we moved into Lewistown and have been there ever since.

"My mother died in 1942, and Dad died in 1954."

TUSS, Rafael (Sec 20-20-30) Rafael Tuss squatted on a piece of land on the Missouri River, about three miles north of Peter Tuss. In 1917 Tony Weingart bought Rafael's land and later sold it to Roland Matthews. (Peter J. Tuss)

UEECK, Robert (Sec 20-13-30) Robert "Bob" Ueek was born in 1890 in Wisconsin. He came to Montana in 1911 and homesteaded in the Judith Gap area. In 1916 he moved to Melstone to work. He met and married Florence Ware, who had filed on a homestead (Sec 30-14-30). They bought the C. D. Prather horse herd and the T-P brand. They continued breeding horses with Steel Dust, Morgan, and Gold Dust sires until 1928, at which time they switched to thoroughbred sires so they could sell to the Army.

In 1938 they entered five T-P geldings in the Montana Pony Express Memorial Day Race from Roundup to

Billings. They also ran a string of bucking horses that were well respected throughout the area. They furnished stock for rodeos at Flatwillow, Melstone, Musselshell, Mosby, Mecaha, Winnett, and other shows.

Robert and Florence had two children, Joyce (1917) and Robert (1919). When the children became old enough for school, Florence moved back to Hopkins, Minnesota, with them. They sometimes summered on the ranch, but called Minnesota their home. Robert (Bud) entered the Air Force in World War II and became a pilot. He flew a Thunderbolt Fighter Plane that he called his "Boiler-maker." He flew over 100 missions and received three silver and fifteen bronze clusters.

In 1943 Robert sold his horse herd to the Komarek Brothers of Roy. They trailed the horses cross-country to their new home. Bob ran the mail route for awhile, and finally in 1945 he sold his holdings to Kenny Bratten. His love of horses, however, demanded that he keep a few for riding and trading.

Although he sometimes visited his family in Minnesota, he had no desire to live anywhere but in Montana. For the last ten years of his life, he traveled around the area, working for others. In January of 1953, Bob wrote to the Winnett Times and reported that he had spent Christmas and New Years in the hospital.

He wrote, "I was herding sheep near Laurel when my horse turned a handspring and rolled over me. I managed to scramble aboard the horse and make it back to camp. I gave the leg what first aid I could, turned the sheep over to the dogs and settled back to wait for the camp tender. He arrived two days later and took me to Billings where they found I had a double fracture just above the ankle on the right leg. This makes three double breaks in a row on my right hind wheel between the knee and ankle."

Robert died on October 24, 1955, at the age of 65.

VAN PARKER, George (Sec 24-21-29) George Van Parker's homestead joined the Herschel Hanson homestead. He sold his place to Anton Heine. (*Roy Enterprise*)

WANGSNESS, Nels Nels Wangsness was born at Bergen, Norway, in 1848. His wife, Mary, was also born at Bergen in 1857. They came to the United States in 1886 and settled in Minnesota where they stayed until 1914, when they came to the Lower Musselshell to homestead.

Nels and Mary had seven children. Alata married Theodore Wangseng. Theodore homesteaded in the Blakeslee community (Sec 22-16-25) and was killed in a car accident in 1928. Alata died of pneumonia in 1931. They left two sons, Tommy and Norman, who then lived with their uncles, Sever, Martin and Ed Wangsness. (See also WANGSENG — Winnett)

Another daughter, Mrs. John Statland, lived in Canada and did not come to Montana. Andrew did not come to Montana either. He lived in North Dakota.

Mabel came with her parents, two brothers, (Ed and Martin), and a sister, Alata, and settled on Martin's

homestead just across from the Ross Post Office. They lived in a tent until their two-room log house was built. She married Oscar Nordahl. (See also NORDAHL)

Edward came with the rest of the family to the Lower Musselshell area and homesteaded on Calf Creek. The area at that time was all open range, with no grazing rights and no fees to pay. Most of the settlers ran cattle. Edward died in 1934, as the result of a skull fracture received when the truck in which he was riding turned over on a hill east of Winnett. He never married. He is buried in the Gilfeather Cemetery on the Lower Musselshell River.

Sever homesteaded in Garfield County on Calf Creek in the Lower Musselshell area. He served as a mail carrier on the Mosby to Mecaha route. He moved from Calf Creek to Mosby because it was more convenient for his twice-weekly drive from Mosby to Mecaha and back.

(W. T. 1946) "Sever Wangsness, a fancy-free bachelor with a Norwegian accent and sense of humor, made his final official trip Saturday, June 29, 1946, on the Mosby to Mecaha route. He indicated that he is rather glad to be through with that twice-weekly responsibility, when a new carrier officially takes over on July 1st.



Martin Wangsness, World War I soldier

"On some occasions, winter weather or extremely muddy dirt roads made the going plenty tough and delayed the mail. On numerous occasions, he brought the mail when the patrons assumed travel was next to impossible. About 2½ years ago, a detour of the hill near the community hall, and a detour across the river to the Allan Ranch on the west side of the river, resulted in Sever's discovering the late Walter Allan, crippled from being thrown from his horse, and his semi-invalid wife unable to get to neighbors for assistance."

Sever never married. He died of a stroke in 1948 and is buried in the Gilfeather Cemetery with his parents and brother.

Martin homesteaded in 1915 on Sec 11-17-29, on part of what became the John Winter Ranch. He enlisted in 1918 and served with A. E. F. in France. He was discharged at the end of the war and returned to the Lower Musselshell area. He sold his homestead and bought the former Berry Roberts Ranch, where he lived until he retired. He never married. He died in 1957 and is buried at the Winnett Cemetery.

Mary Wangsness died in 1923, and Nels died in 1926. They were both buried in the Gilfeather Cemetery on the Lower Musselshell River.

WATTERSON, Angelo (Sec 15-14-30) Angelo Watterson Sr., born at Bannack in 1883, came to the Musselshell Crossing in 1898 and went to school there. (School census, District #22 in 1902)

He and his father located near the mouth of Flatwillow Creek in 1901. In 1904 he went to business college at Grand Island, Nebraska. He and his father filed on their homesteads in 1904. He had two sisters, Thasia (Moyer) and Elizabeth (Thayer), who lived in the Winnett area at one time.

The following information was taken from the W. T. 10-15-60 in an article titled "Early-day Mosby Homesteader Recalls History of Area."

"Angelo and his father came by stage from Junction, near Custer, with Cy Sherman, the stage driver. He spent the summer on the Major Cartwright Ranch, a mile and a quarter upriver from Musselshell Crossing. He homesteaded near the present Mosby Post Office in what was then Dawson County.

"In order to establish post offices and mail routes, it was necessary to carry the mail from one point to another for six uninterrupted months. Angelo assisted in this project to establish a post office at Weede in 1901. The route ran from Weede to Lone Tree, now Ragged Point, and on to Musselshell.

"Mosby, Bryon Dunn and Norman Brockway lived on a gumbo flat, known as Poverty Flat, between Melstone and Weede. Gust Anderson and Pete Bengston were others coming to the area in 1899.

"Watterson recalled that a family named Hough came to the area one spring and lived in 'Beaver Jack' Thomas Bogal's cabin for a year or more.

"In the winter of 1899, two bands of Indians came

along and settled, one on the south bank of Flatwillow Creek and the other a short distance upriver on the Musselshell. They molested no one, and in the spring moved west.

"Watterson lived on his place until 1920, then went out to work on various ranches as a herder and shearer. He always maintained his voting residence in Petroleum County and never missed an opportunity to vote, either in person or absentee. Jack Milburn once brought him down from the N Bar Ranch to vote."

Watterson sold his place in 1925 to H. E. McGiboney. He was married twice but had no children. Angelo died in 1966 of cancer, at the age of 83.

WEAVER, James (Sec 7,8-15-30) James Weaver, the son of Margaret Polk Weaver and Peter S. Weaver, was born in Nebraska in 1874. Jim was one of the earliest settlers on the Musselshell River. His mother came and lived with him from 1895 until 1898, at which time she moved to the state of Washington. She moved back to Petroleum County in 1926 and passed away in 1929.

Jim married Cordelia Lenten in 1919 at Winnett. "Cora," the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Taylor Lenten, was born in 1888 at Wheeling, West Virginia. Jim and Cora had no children, but she had a daughter, Maggie Underwood, whom they raised. Maggie married Wallace Paige Green. (See also GREEN — Musselshell River and Winnett; also WEAVER — Winnett and WILSON — Winnett)

WEEDE, Sarge W. (Sec 18-12-31) The Weede Post Office was authorized, May 25, 1901. Sarge W. Weede was named Postmaster.

The following description of Mr. Weede is taken from an article written by Edward E. Degner, appearing in the Winnett Times, September 29, 1966. "Mr. Weede was an old timer who had lived with the Indians and learned to make leather clothing. He was known by Walter Winnett, B. F. Lepper, Sye Sherman and other old timers. He made hand and foot wear out of buckskin, that could not be better made, trimmed with beads and fringes. At first his nice work was all done by hand. He tanned his own skins and the leather was soft as silk. Later, my mother helped him to get a sewing machine to do his work with."

In about 1910, Mr. Weede sold his homestead and some railroad land he had purchased, to Silas Parkinson. Mr. Weede moved to the Yellow Water Basin.

WELCH, Fred Fred and Nancy Welch are listed as parents of Everette E. (1906) and Ruth (1907), in the census of School District #164. They leased the Robert White place near Willow Creek and moved there in 1927.

WESTON, William and Etha (Sec 8,18-12-31) William and Etha Weston homesteaded in the southeast corner of Petroleum County, near their daughter, Eva Mae Elliott, wife of Walter Elliott. Westons had three other daughters — Kate, Addie and Bertha.

William's homestead was sold to Ray Nyemaster and is now owned by Audrey Mosby. Etha's homestead went to

her daughter, Bertha Osborne.

WHITE, Robert (Sec 4-13-30) The 1923 school census for District #107, Weede, is the last census that lists these children of Robert and Margaret White — Jessie (1908), Gertrude (1910) and Richard (1915). These children were listed in the first census of District #107.

According to land transfer records, this land went to the Federal Land Bank.

WILKINSON, Arthur (Sec 1-12-30) Arlene McDaniel submitted the following story. "In 1912 Rasmus and Elina Hansen, along with Elina's brother, Alfred Christensen, came to Montana to homestead. They came from Chicago on the train to Melstone, and from there, by wagon to their homestead in the southeast corner of Petroleum County, at an area now called Chicago Flats. They brought six of their seven children with them — Arthur, Ted, Lily, Edith, Clarence and Florence. One daughter, Adella, had married and remained in Chicago. There were a few good years, with plenty to keep all of them very busy, but there were a lot of fun times too, so everyone enjoyed it. Then Montana got back to normal, and with poor crops and Rasmus' health failing, they decided to return to Chicago. They left a daughter though; Florence married Art Wilkinson, the neighboring rancher. Ted and Clarence joined the Army.

"Art Wilkinson bought the Hansen homesteads. He was born in Bangor, Maine, in 1875. Art ran away and came west when he was in his teens. His uncles, John and Hall Clement, had a sheep outfit on Flatwillow, and he worked for them until he went wolfing and running wild horses. He squatted on range that had been the CK roundup camp in years before. Here, he built a cabin and set of corrals. The stage between Fort Keogh and Fort Maginnis had a stop a few miles down the river, that later was the Prathers' homestead. The crossing on the Musselshell River was almost always good there; and supplies could come that way, but it was expensive. Art later homesteaded the land, and when he and Florence were married, he built a new house there. He and Florence raised horses in the early years, then some cattle were added, and of course, a big garden kept the family in groceries.

"Their home was actually across the river from Petroleum County, but the stage road from Melstone to Mosby was the only passable road to the ranch and their mail was delivered three times a week at the mailbox there. Many of the folks got groceries and necessities brought out by the stage driver. He would get through when everybody else was limited to horses and a sled. There were a few times it was frozen enough to let him use the river as a road. Everybody put up ice in the winter and enjoyed it in the summer, especially for the homemade ice cream.

"Audrey was born in the summer of 1917, and Marjorie, in the fall of 1918. There had been a schoolhouse for the children out on Chicago Flats, but because so many homesteaders had left due to rough

winters and dry summers, it was moved down by the Musselshell River, with Addison Smith as teacher. Later, it was discontinued, and Art moved his family into Melstone for the school years. Arlene was born in the summer of 1926 and Deane, in the spring of 1930.

"Horses were the main livelihood, and those "27" broncs roamed wild and free. The summer consisted of gathering different stud bunches for branding and working. Things became easier after the 1940s, as the summers became wetter and the price of livestock rose. Now, everything was fenced and all the open range was gone.

"Art died in 1959, and Florence died in 1975. The ranch is still in the family, and though the last few years have seen a lot of grasshoppers and even more dry seasons, trucks and cars have made the journeys shorter and the water situation bearable. Audrey Mosby lives on the home place. Marjorie Sherman lives in Standish, California. Arlene McDaniel lives just out of Wolf Creek, Montana, and Deane lives at East End, Saskatchewan, Canada. There are nine grandchildren, two foster grandchildren, and five great grandchildren."

WILLIAMS, Sam Sam Williams had a place on the Lower Musselshell River that was just below the L. A. Fail place.

About 1907, Sam Williams disappeared from his home on the river. Ole Nordahl (no relation to the other Nordahls in the area) was suspected of foul play for a number of reasons. Ole had been beaten up earlier by Sam Williams for stealing a calf. After the murder of the Schleuter family, when the officials were searching Ole's cabin, they found a pearl-handled six shooter that had been concealed in the chinking of the wall behind the stove, with newspaper pasted on the wall to conceal it. The gun was identified as the one Ed Healy had traded to Sam Williams. (See also NORDAHL, Ole)

After Sam's disappearance, Sam's dogs would show up at Lugo's camp wagon every morning for Lugo to feed them. The dogs showed evidence of digging, and when Lugo commented to the other men that he believed the dogs were digging something up, Ole left the camp and the dogs followed him. No one ever saw the dogs again, and it was rumored that Ole had poisoned them.

No trace of Sam Williams or his horse was ever found. (Marcus Matovich)

WILLETTE, Joseph (Sec 5-15-30) Joseph Willette, born in 1864 at Fort Fairfield, Maine, and Gertrude Peterson, born in 1879 at Mavine on St. Croix, Minnesota, were married in 1900. They came to the Lower Musselshell area to homestead in 1914. They had one son, George, born in 1905. He attended local schools and graduated from Winnett High School. He joined the United States Army in 1924, later going to West Point, where he graduated in 1928. He was a Colonel when he retired in 1958. He and his wife, Marianne (Toms), have one child, Susan (Hopper).

(W. T. 10-22-26) "Mr. and Mrs. Joe Willette, residing in the northeastern part of Petroleum County, known as the

bend of the Musselshell River, have one of the finest ranch homes in the north country. Their home was originally built of logs, 25' by 38', with a nine-foot ceiling. Ted Svindland and P. J. Anderson were engaged to true up the logs and Harry Timm to stucco the exterior and plaster the interior, which operation made a delightful and pretty home for the Willettes.

"Mr. Willette homesteaded on his present location in 1914 and made a start in the cattle industry with seven head of cows. This fall he sold 40 head and has a nice herd left. Alfalfa and hay crops are successfully grown each year."

Joe died in 1938 of a heart attack while milking a cow, and was found in the barn. He is buried in Lewistown. Mrs. Willette had an auction sale after his death and moved to Cut Bank, where she cooked in a hotel. She died in 1966 at San Antonio, Texas, and is buried there.

When Colonel Willette died in June 1989, his son-in-law was quoted in the San Antonio newspaper as saying, "He was a very dignified and reserved man, an authority on American military history; he was sent proof copies of military histories by the authors to verify the facts before publication. He knew some of the authors and did a great deal of reading on the subject, as this was a special interest of his."

WILSON, Harold In 1942 Harold Wilson, with the backing of William Brindley, purchased the John O'Dea place from his heir, Francis McGuire. The Wilsons were from the Broadus area. They were in the process of moving their furniture and ranch equipment to the new ranch. Mrs. Wilson was in the car, and following her was the truck with their possessions. The truck was descending the steep hill toward Cat Creek bridge, when the brakes failed to hold. Wilson and Dundom jumped from the runaway vehicle. Wilson died instantly when he struck the bridge rail, and Dundom died a few days later from injuries sustained in the accident. Daniel Klein, the driver, realizing that he could not make the left turn on the road, turned right, through the guard rail, and circled in a small open field until he stopped. The driver, truck and load were undamaged and were returned to Broadus.

WINTER, John U. (Sec 11-17-29) Johnny, son of William and Anna Winter of Olathe, Kansas, was born November 1, 1887. His early years were spent in Colorado and Wyoming.

As a lad, Johnny dreamed of taking first money at the Cheyenne rodeo and riding with the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, not an unusual aspiration for a young western boy. He practiced his roping and riding, entering rodeos and working for cow outfits, and finally, in 1908, at the ripe old age of 21, he took second money at the Cheyenne, Wyoming, rodeo. A man by the name of Ebon Low was impressed with his abilities and took him to Hawaii, as part of a Wild West Show, where he rode broncs and did trick roping. In 1910, he joined Buffalo Bill's troupe and rode with them for awhile. He was still riding in local rodeos in the 1920s.

In the spring of 1913, Johnny Winter helped Floyd Norris move to Montana. Floyd went back to Wyoming in 1914; however, Johnny stayed and settled at the mouth of Blood Creek where he made his home for the next forty-four years. Through the years, he acquired other places, forming a well-rounded ranch operation.

In 1917 Johnny married Hellan Allan and they had one daughter, Hazel, born at Meca in 1917. Hellan and John separated in 1919, and John married Eulalie Sterrett in 1928.

Eulalie Sterrett, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Sterrett, was born January 1, 1897, in Devils Lake, North Dakota. She received her early schooling in North Dakota, then went to Canada, where she went to teacher training school. She became a qualified teacher, and it was in this capacity that she came to this area in 1925. She continued her teaching career throughout most of her life. While living on the river, she was an active member of the Ross Community Club and was instrumental in the building of the club house. After moving to Winnett, she became very active in the Red Cross, the American Legion Auxiliary, Petroleum County Democratic Party, and other civic organizations. She will always be remembered by her students and co-workers. Eulalie passed away in 1972. John had died in 1958.

Hazel (Winter) Gibson received her primary education in various schools along the Musselshell River. When she was attending the Weede School, she, Alvin Hill, and the Benson children explored an old Indian cave in a butte near the river. They were unable to get to the cave entrance except by being dropped on a rope from a rock above the entrance. In the cave they found bones and bright-colored beads, which they gathered and took with them. Their parents weren't very happy, as they had heard that the cave was a burial ground for Indians who had died of smallpox. Mrs. Hill, Hazel's mother, took the beads and burned them, and the children were taken to town for vaccinations. They had sore arms instead of beads.

Hazel continued her education and became a teacher. She taught for many years in Montana and Wyoming before marrying J. R. (Dick) Gibson and taking over her father's ranch on the river (See also GIBSON, Fred).

WOMBLES, Robert (Sec 22-12-30) Robert and Myrtle Wombles were homesteaders. Their children attended the Weede School at the time School District #107 was formed in 1913. The names and birth years of the children were: Danna (1910) and Roberta (1912). Wombles sold their place to John Hensley.

WOOD, William (Sec 27-15-30) William Wood's obituary in the Winnett Times stated: "William Wood was one of the early settlers of Montana, coming here in the pioneer days from Minnesota. For awhile, he and his wife lived on the old Dave Jackson Ranch on the Musselshell River. He was a typical example of that type of pioneer of the old west who faced the early struggles and privations to contribute his share towards paving the way for the

settling of the country. His home was a mecca of hospitality and he will be long remembered as a true friend and loved by all who knew him."

William died in 1922 from a severe case of appendicitis. His wife and long time friend, Jim Taylor, were at his bedside when he died at the age of 50.

WOODFORD, D. Clinton Clint Woodford, son of Mr. and Mrs. M. M. Woodford, was born in 1932 in Abilene, Kansas. He came to Petroleum County as a lineman for the R. E. A. in 1954. Clint married Shirley Dunlap of Winnett in 1954, and they had a son, William B., born in June 1955. Clint went to work for the Jet Fuel Refinery that same year. Clint and Shirley were divorced; Shirley moved to Billings, Montana, and Clint continued to live at the refinery.

Louanne Hill graduated from Winnett High School in 1949 and shortly thereafter married Robert Sinclair of Winnett. They had four children — James L. (1949), Paula J. (1950), Margaret M. (1952), and Donald K. (1953). Robert and Louanne were divorced in 1956.

In December of 1957, Clint Woodford and Louanne Hill Sinclair were married and made their home at the Jet Fuel Refinery, near Mosby, Montana. In February 1959, a son, Jay Lee, was born to them; and in September 1960, a daughter, Jana Dee, was born.

In that same year, Clint and Louanne purchased the Ted Hill Ranch, with the buildings being very close to where the old Weede trading post and post office once stood. Although the family lived on the river place, Clint continued to work for the refinery. It was at this time, in 1963, that Clint's son, Bill, came to live with the family. In 1966 they purchased the adjoining ranch just south of them, the John Hill place. That summer saw them moving again, just a mile south of John and Hellan's house. In 1967 Clint gave notice at the refinery and went into ranching full time. Clint and Louanne continue to live on the John Hill place, raising sheep, cattle and hay.

James "Jim" Sinclair graduated from Winnett High School in 1968 and married Judy Oliver, of Havre, Montana, in 1970. They have a son, Jason, who is currently a freshman at Havre High. Jim and Judy were divorced. In 1988 Jim married Kate Sprague. They are presently living on the Lou Hill place and working for Clint Woodford. Jim and Kate have a daughter, Sabra, who is four years old. Jim's son, Jase, enjoys spending summers and special weekends with Jim and Kate.

Paula Sinclair graduated from Winnett High School in 1969. (See also BOHN, Jerry — Petrolia)

Margaret "Marge" Sinclair graduated from Winnett High School in 1970. (See also JOHNSON, Jim — Winnett) Donald "Don" Sinclair graduated from Winnett High School in 1971 and married Judy Phillips of Winnett in 1972. Don and Judy have five children — Rory, a sophomore at Stanford High School; Brandi, an eighth grader; Jadra, a fourth grader; Laramie, a second grader; and Dexton, a loveable two-year-old (in 1989). Don and Judy were divorced in 1987. Judy lives at Stanford and

works for the sheriff's department. Don is currently living in Helena, where he is employed.

William "Bill" Woodford graduated from high school at Winnett in 1974 and from Western Montana College in Dillon with a degree in elementary education. He married Jo Ward of Fairfield, and they moved to St. Ignatius, Montana, where he taught for eight years. Jo was employed as a pharmacist. Bill and Jo have three children — Bo, Chase, and Loni. Bill and Jo were divorced in 1985. Bill is currently elementary principal and district special education director at Soap Lake, Washington.

Jay Woodford attended school in Winnett. He went into the trucking business shortly after he graduated in 1977. Jay married Wyna Pease of Winnett in 1984. Wyna trucked with Jay until their son, Cedar, was born in 1986. They make their home on the old Jim McGiboney place, presently owned by Steve Hale. Jay continues to truck. Malori Ann, their baby daughter, is the newest addition to their family.

Jana Woodford received her schooling in Winnett, graduated in 1978, and graduated from Miles Community College with a secretarial degree. She lives in Bozeman, where she attends Montana State University. Jana has two children — Krynn and Devan.

ZIESMAN, Reynold Reynold Ziesman was born at Hyattville, Wyoming. Dorothy Bain, born in Idaho, spent most of her younger years at Worland, Wyoming, and attended schools there. They were introduced by family members and became acquainted at dances and other social gatherings. They were married at Worland in 1942.

They spent the first four years of their married life on the Ziesman family ranch, where they raised sheep, cattle, and put up lots of hay.

Reynold and Dorothy arrived in the Mosby area in 1946, and Reynold worked for William M. Hanlon.



Dorothy and Reynold Ziesman in 1981

Reynold assumed the position of superintendent and pumper of the East Dome field. That particular oil activity was situated north and east of Mosby. (A refinery, which produced what was known as "Jet Fuel," also operated there for 20 years — 1953 to 1973.)

The Ziesmans are friendly and fun-loving folks. Dorothy is a fine musician, and is happy when "fiddling" for community functions. They are great nature lovers, and encouraged the wildlife of the area to become their closest neighbors. They especially enjoyed the capers of the many chipmunks that lived near their house. The chipmunks became so tame, they would crawl up onto Reynold's knee for extra tidbits and attention.



Snack time: Reynold and friend

At one time, Reynold and Dorothy played host to a homeless robin which had been raised by a family in Winnett. The young bird was not ready to fend for himself, so Ziesmans volunteered to take care of it until it was ready to take off. It didn't take the young robin long to find that if he sat on the front porch, Dorothy would invite him into the house. He would walk through the kitchen, jump up

on a stool, and beg for his bite of hamburger or other tidbit.

Neighbors and friends were sorry when Reynold retired. The couple left the community in 1984. In their spare time, they had been building a new home, about two and one half miles east of Lewistown on Highway 200. With an eye to fuel efficiency, Reynold built the house in such a manner that all possible solar energy could be utilized.

Reynold, always busy, continues to beautify their new home. Dorothy continues with her music and is now playing with the "C. D.'s," a musical group in Lewistown.

ZIESMER, Adolph The Ziesmer family moved to the Lorne Boston place near Weede in the early 1930s. Adolph and Gladys Ziesmer listed the following children on the school census: Stanley (1913), Florence (1915), Lorette (1919), Dorothy (1921), Viola (1923), Fern (1926), Robert (1928), and Donald (Mealen) (1930).

A. J. carried mail from Melstone to Mosby and from Mosby to Mecaha until 1938, at which time his route was shortened from Melstone to the Horace McGiboney Ranch. Patrons of the Mosby Post Office who had been getting their mail from Melstone would henceforth get their mail by way of Miles City-Jordan bus service, and from Lewistown train and bus through Winnett.

The perils of early mail carriers on rural roads are well known. A. J. had his share of experiences, but one stood out above the others. All along the Musselshell, the roads were coated with ice, so Mr. Ziesmer had been using the river bottom for a road. Occasionally he was forced to climb out of the river bed, and it was at one of these points, near the mouth of Calf Creek, where the accident happened. The car slid off the road and over a 40-foot embankment. A. J. escaped with minor cuts and bruises. The car was badly smashed but was able to run on its own power after being pulled from the embankment by Dow Bowen.

From the river, Ziesmers moved to Melstone and then on to Columbia Falls, Montana. Mr. Ziesmer enjoyed coming "home" to Mosby to fish each spring. He made his last trip at the age of 93.